

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9816

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, GW

SUBJECT: GERMAN MEDIA REACTION TO INDOCHINA  
DEVELOPMENTS (CONTINUED)

REF: BONN 7021

BEGIN SUMMARY: CURRENT WEST GERMAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF INDOCHINESE DEVELOPMENTS EMPHASIZES THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SITUATION IN SE ASIA AND THAT IN EUROPE. BY UNDERSCORING THAT THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM INDOCHINA DOES NOT PORTEND A U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM EUROPE, THE MEDIA CONTINUE A THEME WHICH HAS RECEIVED E EMPHASIS DURING THE DENOUEMENT OF THE WAR (REFTEL). SOME COMMENTATORS CLAIM THAT THE LIFTING OF THE VIETNAMESE INCUBUS WILL RESULT IN THE U.S. PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO EUROPE. THE NEWS-PAPERS FOLLOWING THIS LINE TEND TO BE THOSE WHICH WERE MOST CRITICAL OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN SE ASIA. MANY NEWSPAPERS THAT GENERALLY SUPPORTED U.S. POLICY ON NDOCHINA END TO BE LESS SANGUINE. YET, FOR THE MOST PART, EVEN THEY ARE TRYING TO QUIET FEARS OVER WHAT EFFECT THE U.S. EXIT IN INDOCHINA MIGHT HAVE ON EUROPEAN SECURITY. END SUMMARY

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1. FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE (CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENT) BY

FRITZ ULRICH FACK: "...AMERICA WILL...HARDLY GIVE WAY TO SELF-RIGHTOUSNESS BUT WILL LOOK AT THE MISTAKES WHICH WERE MADE. DURING THE COURSE OF THE VIETNAMESE WAR, IT DID SO WITH A PASSION THAT NEARLY UNNERVED THE NATION AND, IN ANY EVENT, UNBALANCED IT....ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF PSYCHOLOGY, THERE SHOULD NOW BE A REACTION WHICH WILL BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF AMERICA'S ALLIES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. THERE ARE OBSERVERS WHO QUESTION THIS, REFERRING TO AN ALLEGED GROWING TREND TOWARDS ISOLATIONISM IN AMERICA. HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT PROBABLE....EVEN POLITICAL PESSIMISTS MAY HAVE HOPES INSOFAR AS EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST ARE CONCERNED. ASIDE FROM THE ETHNIC AND POLITICO-MORAL TIES BETWEEN THESE PARTNERS AND AMERICA, THERE ARE THREE ESSENTIAL ARGUMENTS FOR UNVARYING FIRMNESS AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE ALLIANCE: THE POTENTIAL OF THESE COUNTRIES, THEIR BUFFER ROLE, AND THEIR THOROUGHLY DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE. HERE,...AMERICA IS NOT ENGAGED ON BEHALF OF CORRUPT RULING CLIQUES AND THEIR DELIQUENT SOCIAL SYSTEM BUT RATHER ON BEHALF OF GENUINE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES, SOME OF THEM SOMEWHAT SHAKY, BUT ON THE WHOLE CAPABLE OF ACTION. EUROPE MAY RIGHTFULLY EXPECT THAT THIS WILL CARRY WEIGHT."

2. SEUDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG (INDEPENDENT LIBERAL) BY JOSEF RIEDMILLER: "...THE WAR IN VIETNAM HAS COME TO AN END BUT IT DID NOT BRING QUIET TO INDOCHINA OR SE ASIA. COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS OR DISSIDEHTS ARE ALREADY IN ACTION FOR NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS MOTIVES IN FOUR COUNTRIES OF THIS REGION. THEY ALL WILL FEEL ENCOURAGED IN THEIR STRUGGLE BY THE VICTORY OF THE COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS AND BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT FOR A GREAT POWER TO INTERVENE MILITARILY IN A JUNGLE DOES NOT LEAD ANYWHERE....ASIAN COUNTRIES, ABOVE ALL, BUT NOT ONLY THEY, WILL HARDLY HAVE FAILED TO TAKE NOTE OF WASHINGTON'S REPEATED REFERENCES TO THE FACT THAT THE U.S. HAD NOT SIGNED A TREATY OF ALLIANCE WITH SOUTH VIETNAM... BUT JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA AND TAIWAN, WHICH IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER RECEIVED CLEARLY-FORMULATED ASSURANCES OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. IN 1972, LEARNED THAT THOSE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSURANCES WERE NOT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY IF THE LARGER INTERESTS OF A GREAT POWER WERE AT STAKE. THEY LEARNED THIS WHEN WASHINGTON MADE OVERTURES TO PEKING. BASICALLY ASIAN CONFIDENCE IN AMERICA HAS BECOME QUESTIONABLE FOR ALL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES, WHETHER THEY CAN PRODUCE A TREATY OR NOT.

IT IS NOT ONLY THE WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM

THAT CORRODES AMERICAN PRESTIGE; IT IS ALSO AMERICA'S  
CLEAR UNWILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE SHOULDERING THE BURDEN  
FOR OTHERS THAT PROMPTS CAUTION AND RESOLUTION AND  
LIMITS AMERICAN INFLUENCE EVEN IN AREAS WHERE AMERICA

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9817

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IS STILL WILLING TO EXERCISE IT....THE SIMPLE CONCLUSION  
FROM THE AMERICAN FIASCO IN INDOCHINA SEEMS TO BE THAT  
IT IS NOW CHINA'S TURN TO ASSUME A PROTECTING ROLE IN  
EAST ASIA, IF ONLY TO KEEP THE RIVAL SOVIET UNION AWAY  
FROM THE AREA....BUT CHINA IS NOT A WELCOME PROTECTING  
POWER EVERYWHERE. AND WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT, PEKING  
CANNOT WISH TO SHATTER AMERICAN PRESTIGE. IT MUST BE  
INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING THAT PRESTIGE AND NOT JUST  
IN EUROPE. FOR WITHDRAWAL OF THE U.S. FROM ASIA AND  
EUROPE WOULD ONLY BENEFIT THE SOVIET UNION....DERISION  
OF THE AMERICANS THUS FAR DOES NOT RECOMMEND ITSELF TO  
THE CHINESE, BUT DOES IT DO SO FOR THE SOVIETS? THEY  
HAVE ALREADY ANSWERED THE QUESTION BY MERELY TAKING DUE  
NOTE OF THE VICTORY OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WHOM THEY  
SUPPORT. THIS SHOWS THAT MOSCOW DOES NOT WANT TO  
IRRITATE THE AMERICANS TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY LOSE  
INTEREST IN DETENTE. BUT SOMETHING ELSE COUNTS TOO:

AS A RESULT OF THE VIETNAM WAR THE U.S. WAS TIED DOWN  
SO STRONGLY--DOMESTICALLY AS WELL--THAT IT NEGLECTED  
OR EVEN RENOUNCED OTHER INTERESTS AND OBLIGATIONS.  
THE IDEA SUGGESTS ITSELF THAT THE WESTERN GREAT POWER  
WILL NOW HAVE MORE TIME AND ENERGY FOR A SHOWDOWN WITH  
ITS OPPONENTS. AMERICA HAS LOST A WAR, PRESTIGE AND  
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INFLUENCE, BUT NOT ITS POWER."

3. MUENCHNER MERKUR (PRO CDU/CSU), BY FRITZ MEURER:  
"CONSEQUENCES NECESSITATE CONCLUSIONS. SURELY THE  
AMERICANS NOW FIND THEMSELVES PUSHED OFF TO THE RIM OF  
ASIA. BUT THEIR GIVING UP WILL RESULT IN CONCENTRATION  
AND REDEFINING OF WHAT COUNTS. TO JAPAN FALLS AN EVEN  
GREATER ROLE. THERE ARE, IN ANY CASE, BETTER  
PROSPECTS FOR TAIWAN'S EXISTENCE AFTER WASHINGTON-PEKING  
RELATIONS HAVE COOLED. FINALLY, THE U.S. , WHETHER IT  
WANTS TO OR NOT, REMAINS A PACIFIC POWER. TOGETHER WITH  
THE ISLAND BASTIONS OF GUAM AND WAKE IT MAY NOW REFLECT  
ON OLD ADMIRAL MAHAN'S THEORY OF 'THE INFLUENCE OF  
SEA POWER ON HISTORY.' NOBODY, HOWEVER, WILL MINIMIZE  
WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN INDOCHINA. FEELING DEPRESSED IS  
EVERYONE'S RIGHT. MUCH AS CRITICISM MAY BE CALLED FOR,  
THIS DOES NOT JUSTIFY INSULTING THE AMERICANS OR OF  
DOUBTING AMERICA'S POLICY AS A WHOLE. SUCH AN ATTITUDE  
WOULD BE SHORT-SIGHTED AND DETRIMENTAL. WHAT HAS  
HAPPENED GIVES RISE TO THOUGHT. BUT SUCH A RETHINKING  
MAY BE BENEFICIAL. AMERICA'S ALLIES CAN ONLY ARRIVE  
AT THE CONCLUSION THAT THEIR SECURITY IS INCREASINGLY  
GUARANTEED AS THEY FURTHER DEVELOP THE WILL TO HELP  
THEMSELVES. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS MAKES A U.S. THAT  
IS ENTERING THE THIRD CENTURY OF ITS HISTORY ABIDE BY  
ITS LEADERSHIP ROLE...."  
HILLENBRAND

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